

CHRISTIANITY TODAY'S SMOKESCREEN ABOUT IMMORAL ARTICLE

June 11, 2000 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -- On June 3 I published an article titled "Christianity Today Writer Mocks Biblical Morality." It described the article "Sex and the Single Evangelical" by Lauren Winner, a staff writer for Christianity Today and writer-in-residence for Christianity Today's sister publication, Books and Culture: A Christian Review. Winner's article was published on Beliefnet.com, a web site dedicated to religious topics.

Winner begins her article "Sex and the Single Evangelical" by describing a personal experience. She and a male friend named David are drinking wine and eating crackers in the home of another friend named Sarah. The latter asks where Winner and David were the previous evening, and they tell her that they were in a hotel room alone on a king-size bed. Sarah responds in amazement, curses, and calls Winner an "evangelical whore." Winner goes on to mock the slogan "True Love Waits" (which challenges young people to remain virgins until marriage). She says, "This slogan might work when you're 15. Ten years later, catch-phrases don't really do the trick." She claims there are "thousands" of unmarried evangelicals who ignore the Bible's command to be celibate outside of marriage. She describes a girl who lost her virginity at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. She calls for "an honest conversation about sexuality" and an investigation "into what the Bible has to say about sex."

REPLY FROM CHRISTIANITY TODAY

One of my readers wrote to Christianity Today to express outrage at Winner's article, and received the following reply:

Dear ----,

Thank you for writing about Lauren Winner's Beliefnet.com essay. When we read it earlier this year, the Christianity Today staff was as horrified as you and the authors of the article you sent me. Fortunately, we were able to talk to Lauren and ask her what she meant by what she wrote. Unfortunately, most others have not been able to do so.

Lauren has assured me that she supports biblical teaching on sexuality. (Indeed, she has in other places published articles deploring premarital sex and opposing masturbation.) This particular article, it seems, was written in a fit of pique at her friend, and she was not careful to say clearly what she meant. Instead she left the impression that she wanted to see the church's standards changed.

What Lauren really wants is more outright support for those young adults struggling with sexual temptation and more straight-from-the-shoulder discussion of the reasons for our standards. As she wrote, slogans aren't enough. In the aftermath of this article, Lauren is very sorry that she

wrote the way she did, leaving the door open so wide to misreading. (And, as I said, our whole staff misread her, too.)

Lauren is part of a Lilly-grant funded program for mentoring young writers. The grant funding and her position with Christianity Today Incorporated lasts through November. In the meantime, we have been doing a lot more mentoring than we expected to. Please pray for Lauren as she continues to grow in grace.

David Neff
Executive Editor

REPLY FROM BROTHER CLOUD:

Thank you for forwarding that. It is a smokescreen. Neff begins with a sly remark that leaves the impression that the real problem here is that I did not approach Lauren Winner personally about her article in order to “ask her what she meant by what she wrote.” I saw no reason to do that. The woman is a professional writer. The article is plainly written. Why should I not accept it upon its face? She describes her own personal fornication and exhibits no repentance for it. Why would I think that she does not really believe what she states?

Further, I do not believe Neff when he says the article does not plainly state what the author meant. It was plainly written and obviously does state what she believes and what she wanted to say. Either she committed fornication with her friend David, or she was lying about it when she stated it in the article. Her article fits right in with the rest of the vile and heretical Beliefnet material. Her association with that organization alone should be enough cause for CT to dismiss her if they were serious about obeying the Bible (1 Corinthians 15:33).

The fact that CT has allowed her to continue working with them is condemnation enough. The article is so wicked that it should call for discipline by her church and by any Christian organization with which she is associated (1 Corinthians 5). Yet the article remains at the Beliefnet web site (as of June 10, 2000) and she remains associated with CT.

Neff says that Lauren simply wants “more straight-from-the -shoulder discussion of the reasons for our standards” and implies that he agrees with her. The fact is that the reasons for our standards on morality are simply that we believe the Bible is God’s Word and the Bible plainly forbids such things. What more is there to discuss? The Apostle Paul did not go into lengthy discussions about such things with the saints in the wicked city of Corinth. He simply preached the Word of God to them and required that they obey God. New Evangelicals such as Christianity Today have rarely been content with a simple thus saith the Lord, though.

Christianity Today has published many things that degrade biblical morality and they are associated with many people who do the same. That is a sad fact which all of the smokescreens in the world cannot remove.